

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 7, 2005. Claims 13, 15 and 17 have been cancelled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 4 to 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 18 to 23 remain in the application, of which claims 4 to 6, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18 and 22 have been amended herein. Claims 4, 9, 18 and 22 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Initially, the Examiner's indication that claims 9, 17, 18, 22 and 23 contain allowable subject matter is acknowledged with appreciation. In response, independent claim 4 has been amended to include the substance of allowable claim 17 and intervening dependent claims 15 and 13, and dependent claims 9 and 18 have been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner. In indication of allowability and passage to issue are therefore respectfully requested for all claims.

Claims 4 to 9 and 11 to 23 were objected to for various alleged informalities. As indicated above, claims 13, 15 and 17 have been cancelled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the associated objections or rejections. Since claims 4 to 6, 11 and 22 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, withdrawal of the objection and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 4 to 6, 8, 11 to 14 and 19 to 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. patent No. 6,275,547 ("Saeki") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,053 ("McDermott") and U.S. Patent No. 6,650,661 ("Buchanan"); claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Saeki in view of McDermott and Buchanan and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,721,379 ("Cranford"); and claims 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Saeki in view of McDermott and Buchanan and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,796,313 ("Eitan"). For the reasons stated above, withdrawal of the rejections and further examination are respectfully requested.

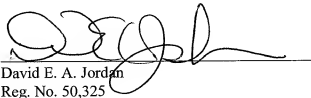
Accordingly, independent claims 4, 9, 18 and 22 are believed to be allowable over the applied combination of references. The other remaining rejected claims in the application are either withdrawn, or are each dependent from the independent claims and are thus believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define additional aspects of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that the entire application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

The fees in the amount of \$710.00 for the additional claims fee (\$200) and the three month extension of time fee (\$510) are being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06 1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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